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WASHINGTON LETTER.

WASHINGTON, June 20, 1900.

The geological and topographical surveys in progress in various parts of Alaska, under the U. S. Geological Survey and U. S. Coast and Geodetic Survey, are to be continued at three points during the ensuing season. The greater part of the work is in the Seward Peninsula, the large body of country between Kotzebue Sound and Norton Sound, forming the westernmost extension of Alaska. It is at present the focus of interest of the whole territory, since on one of its southern points lies the Nome district, and farther north, on the coast, nearly as far as Bering Strait, and opposite Port Clarence, the newly opened gold district of Cape York. Inland, still farther to the north, and in the direction of the neck of the peninsula, lies the unexplored extension of the Cape Nome gold-bearing belt.

The plans of the U. S. Geological Survey include the examination of the Nome region and environs and reconnoissances of the trend of the gold-bearing belt, working both from the north and south. Aside from work on the Seward Peninsula, the Geological Survey has placed a party in the Copper River district, and will store supplies on the Koyukuk River, in preparation for an Arctic exploration in the summer of 1901.

The Coast and Geodetic Survey is sending two steamers to survey the southern coast of the Seward Peninsula, and also two parties to different points on the southeastern coast of Alaska. The survey of the southern coast of the peninsula will be conducted by the steamer *Pathfinder* from Cape Nome to St. Michaels, and by the steamer *Patterson* to Cape York and Port Clarence. Especial attention will be given to the examination of harbor facilities for Cape Nome and Cape York. The work on Golofnin Bay, which was begun last year, will be completed, and the coast to the east examined by the *Pathfinder*. The work at Cape Nome is of special importance, because the region has not yet been visited by Government surveyors. The *Pathfinder* started from Seattle June 13, carrying, besides its officers, the members of the Geological Survey parties.

The Geological Survey force which is to work on the land area adjacent to the waters traversed by the steamer *Patterson* consists of a topographic party in charge of Mr. E. C. Barnard and a geological party under Mr. Alfred Brooks. The region covered by this party is the gold-bearing country in the southern part of the Seward

Peninsula, between Cape Nome and FishRiver and Port Clarence—an area of from three thousand to four thousand square miles. It is to be surveyed on a scale of 4 miles to the inch, producing a map similar to that of the Fortymile Quadrangle surveyed in 1898. A complete triangulation from Golofnin Bay to Port Clarence is to be carried through for the benefit of the Coast and Geodetic Survey. The party under Mr. Brooks will make a reconnoissance of the new Cape York district, a special study of the extent of the gold-bearing formations, and the condition of occurrence of veins from which the placer gold of the foothills and river valleys back of Nome is derived.

The great gold-bearing belt whose southwestern termination has been opened up in the vicinity of Nome appears to extend across the Seward Peninsula in a general northeasterly direction towards the Good Hope Bay and Keewalik River. The party which has for its especial object the reconnoissance of this belt will be landed on Good Hope Bay by one of the Coast Survey steamers as soon as the ice breaks and will then work southward. It consists of Mr. W. J. Peters, topographer, and Mr. W. C. Mendenhall, geologist. They will survey the northeastern part of the Seward Peninsula, returning across the neck by Buckland Bay to Norton Bay.

Last season the headwaters of the Koyukuk and Gens de Large rivers, in the comparatively unknown northwestern part of Alaska, were explored by a Geological Survey party. It is proposed to prepare this summer for exploration in 1901 of the country lying within the Arctic Circle, between the Koyukuk and the Arctic Ocean. In order to accomplish this object, it is important to leave the Yukon sufficiently early in the season to return before the ice closes in the fall. If supplies are cached on the Koyukuk this season, a party with a light outfit can come in by sledge the following winter, ascend the rivers on the ice early in the spring, and come out after the ice is broken up. The supplies are to be stored at the mouth of the Allenkakat River, which is just within the Arctic Circle, and the proposed route follows up the Allenkakat to the divide by which it heads against streams flowing north to the Arctic Ocean. Thence the party will proceed down some stream to the ocean and along the coast west and south until picked up by a steamer.

In the southeastern part of Alaska the Coast and Geodetic Survey will have the steamer *Gedney* doing coast pilot work, and a party under Mr. H. D. Ritter at Prince William Sound. The latter will carry on triangulation, coast-line surveys and hydrographic work.

During the summer of 1899 indications of copper were discovered

by the Geological Survey party which made a reconnoissance of the headwaters of the Copper, Tanana and Nebesna rivers. The chief copper districts are the valley of the Chettyna, a western tributary of the Copper River, south of the Wrangel Alps, and the region about the headwaters of the Copper and Nebesna rivers north of the Wrangel Alps. This season a topographical and geological survey will be made of the Chettyna River district. It is an area of 3,000 square miles, and the map will be on a scale of four miles to an inch. The party, which left Seattle on May 30, consists of Mr. T. G. Gerdine, and Mr. F. C. Schrader, geologist. This area will also be connected with the work done by the Coast and Geodetic Survey on the coast near Valdes, and a geological exploration will be carried through, if possible, between the valley of the Chettyna and the south coast parallel to it.

In the United States proper, the usual work of the Geological Survey will be continued in various sections, and in some localities the advance will be more rapid than usual, on account of co-operation with State surveys. Considerable work will be done in New York, Pennsylvania, Ohio and Maine. This latter State co-operated for the first time in 1899. This is also the first season that Ohio has co-operated, and plans are made for the completion of one or two atlas sheets in that State. Plans for co-operation with California are to be placed before the State Legislature next winter. One work of especial interest is the continuation of the survey of the line between Idaho and Montana, from the international boundary to the crest of the Bitterroot Mountain range.

On the eastern shore of the country the Coast and Geodetic Survey will carry on coast and harbor examinations at four points. The steamers *Eagle* and *Bache* will work in Chesapeake Bay. The *Bache*, until July 1, will survey the lower part of the bay, conducting a hydrographic examination from the mouth of the Potomac to the capes, preparing the triangulation as a base for topography. In June the *Blake* came up from Porto Rico, where she has been engaged all winter, and will conduct a survey on Savannah River. The Savannah Bar will be examined and a deep-waterway sought. The *Matchless*, also from Porto Rico, will conduct an examination of the old channel entrance to Charleston Harbor. Some work will be done also at Portsmouth Harbor.

On the west coast of the country, Puget Sound at Seattle and Port Townsend will be examined by the *Gedney* before her departure for Alaska, and the steamer *McArthur* will examine the bar outside the Golden Gate at San Francisco. On August 1 a party will be

sent to carry on hydrography and topography at the mouth of the Columbia.

The western forest reserves, of which an examination has been carried on during the last three seasons by the Geological Survey, under the charge of Mr. Henry Gannett, will be further studied this season. Over half of the total area of the reserves has now been examined, and a report of the work during the season of 1897 has appeared as Part V of the Nineteenth Annual Report of the Survey. The results of the work of the season of 1898 are in the hands of the public printer, and a report of the work of 1899 is in course of preparation. Last season the whole of the Lewis and Clark Reserve was examined, and the Mt. Rainier Reserve completed. Work was also done in the Olympic, the southern part of Cascade and Ashland reserves, and an examination was made of the Yosemite National Park and Stanislaus Forest Reserve, which adjoins the park on the north. The present season's work will be to examine the country north of the Stanislaus Reserve. From this region the timber was removed during the early mining days in California, and it is especially desirable to determine to what extent new growth is coming up. Other regions which will be examined this season are the country between the Mt. Rainier and the Washington reserves in Washington, with a view to reserving also that area and so including the whole Cascade range. The examination of the Olympic Reserve will also be completed this year.

The Division of Forestry of the Department of Agriculture, during the present season, will be concerned largely with the effect of sheep pasturing on land which is suitable for the growing of timber. Mr. Gifford Pinchot, the Chief of the Division, is making an examination of various lands in which sheep are pastured in Arizona and New Mexico, hoping to establish beyond a doubt whether or not land is rendered worthless for subsequent growth of timber by sheep pasturage, and how much the young growth is injured by the passage of the flocks. Other parts of the Western States are being examined by Mr. Pinchot's assistants.

The water resources of the United States are also being studied systematically by the hydrographic branch of the Geological Survey. The appropriation for this purpose has been increased from $50,000 to $100,000, and a number of important reservoir sites will be surveyed in the West, in addition to the stream measurements carried on throughout the entire country.

The demand for official data concerning the available water

power on various rivers is notable as showing the rapid utilization of these, especially through electrical transmission of power. Examinations have already been begun of the headwaters of Kings and San Joaquin rivers in California, Truckee River in Nevada, and Milk River in Northern Montana. Close co-operation is had with the Forestry Division in the study of the effect of forests upon the water supply, and for this purpose a joint reconnoissance is being made of the southern Appalachian forest area; the character of the forest growth and its value is being determined by the Forestry Division, and the volume and fluctuation of the rivers issuing from its area is being studied by the Division of Hydrography.

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